

A new species of *Maytenus* (Celastraceae) in Ethiopia

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SYNOPSIS. A new species of *Maytenus*, *M. harenensis* Sebsebe, is described from south-east Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Maytenus* was represented by 12 species in Ethiopia (Sebsebe, 1985). During a recent ecological study to the relatively undercollected and undisturbed Harena Forest in the Bale Adm. Region in SE. Ethiopia (Lisanework Nigatu, 1987), a different-looking species of *Maytenus* was found to occupy the upper altitudinal zone of the forest. At the time, due to lack of flowering material, it was difficult to give it a proper name. In subsequent field trips to the area in 1988 adequate flowering and fruiting material of the species was collected and studied, and field observations were made, which enabled the author to describe it as an additional new species to the *Flora of Ethiopia*.

MAYTENUS HARENENSIS SEBSEBE

Maytenus buchananii (Loes.) Wilczek affinis, sed rami fere glabris, inflorescentiis usque 5 cm longis et glabris, floris 7 mm latis cum disci concavis, capsulis majoribus differt. Typus: Ethiopia, Bale Adm. Region, Delo Awraja, Harena Forest, 2900 m, 21 April 1988, *Sebsebe Demissew* 2064 (ETH!-holotypus; BM!, K!, UPS!-isotypi).

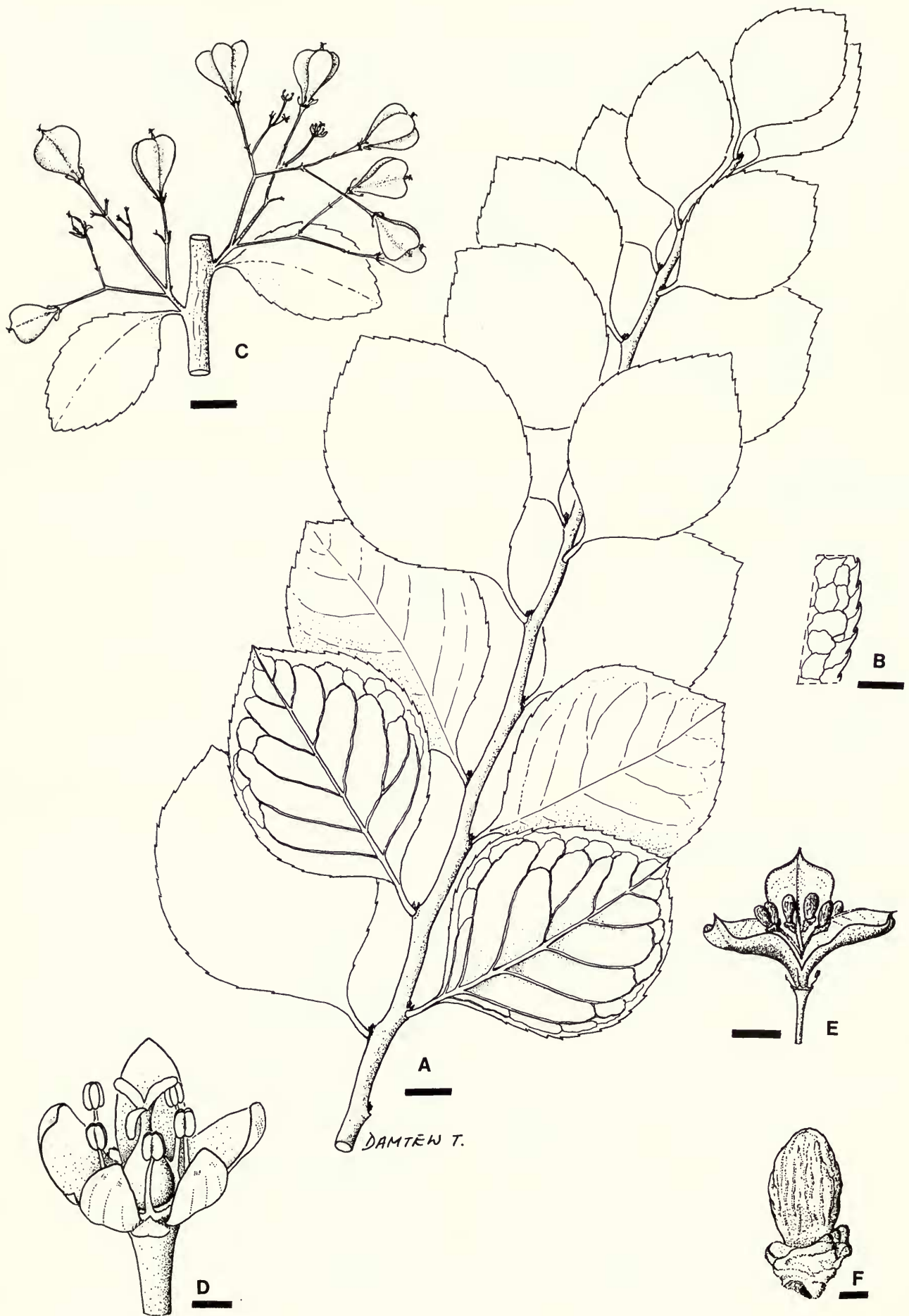
Fig. 1.

Shrub to tree up to 6 m high with spines up to 8 mm long. Branches flattened, dark to reddish brown, glabrous, sometimes appressed puberulous in the young ones, without or with scattered pale white lenticels. Leaves alternate; lamina pale green, concolorous, 2-6(-7.7) × 1.5-5(-6.5) cm, broadly elliptic to obovate, rounded, acute to abruptly acuminate at the apex, cuneate to angustate at the base, crenate at the margin, coriaceous, veins and reticulation seen on both surfaces, more prominent below, with 5-6 lateral veins; petiole 4-6 mm long, red to dark brown, glabrous. Cymes (2-)-2.5-3.5 cm long (up to 5 cm in fruit), axillary, 2-3 in each axil, monochasial, with peduncle 3-12 mm long, pale green to red, glabrous; pedicels 5-10 mm long, articulated at the base,

pale green to red, glabrous. Flowers hermaphrodite, up to 25 in each cyme, each flower 6-7 mm in diameter. Sepals green to red, triangular c. 1 × 1 mm, glabrous, ciliate at the margin. Petals white to white tinged pink, obovate, c. 3 × 1.5 mm with entire margin. Stamens 5, alternating with the petals; filaments 1.5-2 mm long arising below the disc. Disc rounded, 2.5-3.5 mm in diameter, concave. Ovary 3-locular with 2 ovules/locule, conical, ½ immersed in the disc, as long as style; style c. 1 mm long with 3-branched stigma. Capsule pink to red, (5-)-8-17 mm long, obconic, 3-gonous, glabrous. Seeds red, 6-8 in each capsule, 3-4 mm long, glossy with a fleshy white aril at the base.

DISTRIBUTION. Known only from the Bale Adm. Region in SE. Ethiopia in Harena Forest in the *Schefflera abyssinica* and *Hagenia abyssinica* zone between 2600-3050 m.

NOTES. The new species is very closely related to *Maytenus buchananii* on account of its habit, coriaceous pale green leaves, obconic pale pink to red capsules, and whitish basal aril on the seed. However, it is distinguished by its almost glabrous branches with few lenticels, a glabrous inflorescence to 5 cm long, large flowers 6-7 mm in diameter with concave disc, and capsule (5-)-8-17 mm long. In contrast, *M. buchananii* has puberulous branches with numerous lenticels, a pubescent inflorescence only up to 2.3 cm long, flowers c. 2 mm in diameter with convex disc, and capsule 4-10 mm long (only 4 mm long in Ethiopia). These differences involve several plant organs, and therefore warrant the recognition of this taxon at the rank of species. According to the general trends in African *Maytenus* established in Sebsebe (1985), the large flowers and the almost glabrous stems appear to be more primitive characters than the correlating characters in *M. buchananii*, but the short broad leaves are quite different in the two species, and suggest that a common ancestry may be elsewhere in Africa. In fact, the Indian *M. ovata* (Walp.) Loes. has leaf variation intermediate between that of *M. harenensis* and that of *M. buchananii*. But in other characters this gap is not filled by *M. ovata*. The flowers and the capsules of *M. harenensis* are larger than those of *M. ovata*, and the leaf apex is acutely, not obtusely acuminate.



ADDITIONAL SPECIMENS. **ETHIOPIA.** Bale Adm. Region, Harena Forest, 3.7 km N. of Kecha towards Rira, 2620 m, 10 August 1986, *Mesfin T.* 5140 (ETH!); 2 km S. of Rira, 2800 m, 10 August 1986, *Mesfin T.* 5148 (ETH!); 3.3 km N. of Rira, 3040 m, 15 August 1986, *Mesfin T.* 5345 (ETH!); 1 km S. of Rira, 2900 m, 21 February 1988, *Sebsebe D. & Nigist A.* 2052 (BM!, ETH!, K!); 8 km below Rira towards Delo Mena, 2600 m, *Gilbert & Sebsebe D.* 8514 (ETH!, K!).

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Fig. 1 *Maytenus harenensis* Sebsebe. A: young branch. B: enlarged part of leaf. C: fruiting branch. D: flower. E: capsule opened. F: seed. Magnifications: A and C scale = 10 mm; B and E scale = 5 mm; D and F scale = 1 mm. A and B from *Sebsebe D.* 2064 and C–F from *Sebsebe D. & Nigist A.* 2052.